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"smell" will drive away turtle, and leaves should therefore not be taken in a canoe. A man who has been handling the leaves would not go turtle-hunting. 824 278 757

Another remedy is a species of *Alpinia*. The leaves and stems of this plant are chewed and the juice swallowed for certain ailments. The plant is also used when taking honey. A man takes some of the leaves in his mouth and chews them well. Before taking the honeycomb he sprays the saliva from his mouth over and around it. He may also rub the chewed leaves over his body. The natives say that in this way they are able to prevent the bees from stinging them.

Magical properties are attributed to a number of plants that have not been botanically identified. Thus the leaves of a small tree called *tare* in *Aka-Jeru* are crushed and moistened with water and rubbed over the body as a remedy for illness. A strip of bark from the same tree is tied round the chest of a man with a pain in his chest. The bark of two trees called (in *Aka-Jeru*) *tip* and *laro* is crushed and moistened and rubbed over a sick man's body. The leaves of a plant called *pare* are crushed with water and the infusion is drunk by persons suffering from diarrhœa and abdominal pains. A creeper called *korotli* is crushed and tied round a limb in cases of snake-bite. The seeds of the *Entada scandens* are heated in the fire and applied (while hot) to such wounds as that from the tusk of a boar.

There are a certain number of trees and plants about which the natives say that any person cutting them will become blind. The names of four of these in *Aka-Jeru* are *jin*, *burut*, *dey*, and *mit*.

We may turn now to animals and animal substances. Magical properties are attributed to bees'-wax, particularly to black bees'-wax. In a case of pleurisy black bees'-wax was heated until it was soft, and then smeared over the man's chest. Bees'-wax is believed to keep away the spirits of the forest. 825 278 755

If a man be bitten by a snake and the snake be killed it is skinned and the inner surface of the skin is applied to the wound.

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have seen that this interpretation explains the occasions on which such painting is used. To complete the argument it is necessary to consider the occasions on which the use of white clay is forbidden.

Those to whom this prohibition applies are (1) a youth or girl who is *aka-op*, i.e., who is abstaining from certain foods during the initiation period, (2) a mourner, (3) a homicide during the period of isolation, and (4) a person who is ill. All these persons are excluded from full participation in the active social life, and therefore the social value of each of them is diminished. It would obviously be wrong for a person in such a condition to express by decorating himself a social value that he did not at the time possess.

The occasions on which this style of painting is used or forbidden are thus all satisfactorily explained by our hypothesis. It remains to consider the nature of the painting itself, and how far it is an appropriate means of expression. To do this we must discuss very briefly some of the processes of symbolic thought of the Andamanese. Conditions of well-being (both individual and social) are associated in the minds of the Andamanese with fine weather, both directly (through physiological action) and indirectly (through the effect of fine weather on the social life). Hence *Tomo*, who, as we shall see in the next chapter, is a personification of fine weather, is a being who is connected with goodness and happiness. With fine weather, and therefore with individual and social well-being, the Andamanese associate brightness and whiteness (for which they have only one word) and any bright or light colour. The association of light and dark with euphoric and dysphoric conditions respectively has a psycho-physical basis, for it seems to be universal in human nature. Now the clay that the Andamanese call *tol-odu* is the whitest substance they know, and is for this reason fitted to be symbolical of conditions of well-being. Fine weather is associated, in the minds of the Andamanese with honey, because in the season of fine weather honey is plentiful, and is also associated for a similar reason with snakes. Sweetness itself is universally associated with pleasant things, again through a psycho-physical link. The Andamanese believe in a special con-

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nection between honey and a species of large snake called *wara-jobo* or *or-čubi*[1], so that this snake comes to be representative of fine weather and sweetness and therefore generally of states of well-being. Now, throughout the Great Andaman the pattern in which white clay is painted on the body is called after this snake, and the zig-zags of which the pattern is composed may be supposed to be representative of the snake itself. When, therefore, a man paints himself with white clay in a pattern which he regards as representing the snake *wara-jobo*, it is evident that the painting is meant to express a condition of well-being, with which the snake itself, and whiteness, are, by a number of links, closely associated. This is not all, however. The Andamanese, we may not doubt, derive from the painted pattern an esthetic pleasure due to its rhythmical character, its shape as an arrangement of lines and spaces. Further it provides the pleasure that we obtain from a thing elegantly and skilfully made, and this explains why so much care is taken in the making of the pattern. This pleasure at what we may call the beauty of the pattern heightens the effect produced by its symbolic references. The real value of the pattern, its pleasure-giving quality, is transferred to the man on whose body it is executed. He himself is pleased with it, proud of it, and so becomes pleased with and proud of himself, for the pattern by being imprinted on his body becomes part of him. The sense of self attaches to it, as with us the sense of self attaches to our clothes.

It would be interesting to carry the analysis of the mental processes involved in all this a stage or two further, but enough has been said, I hope, to show that the nature of the painting with clay is appropriate to its use as marking or expressing value.

Patterns are sometimes painted with this same white clay on the face alone, such patterns being built up either of the zig-zags of the snake pattern, or of rhythmically arranged series of short lines. The use of such paintings is regulated by a sort of etiquette. By so having his face decorated a man expresses that he is pleased with himself, and obviously there are occasions on which it is appropriate and others on which it is inappropriate

[1] See p. 227.

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133 2,400 feet, situated in North Andaman, and visible at a distance of 60 miles.

2nd. *Narcondam*,[1] a small hilly island, containing an extinct volcano, with an elevation of 2,330 feet, lying about 70 miles east of North Andaman.

3rd. *Barren Island*, 75 miles S.S.W. of *Narcondam*, and about 42 miles east of the nearest island of the Great Andaman group, from no portion of the coast of which is it visible. It contains an active volcano, the height of which is about 1,015 feet.

[501] 2. Until recent years[2] the first only of these was known to the aborigines, probably owing to the circumstance that they, at least the natives of Great Andaman, have never been seen to venture far out to sea in their frail and clumsy canoes. The name borne by this hill is *Pū·luga lâ·kà bang-* (*lit.* Creator his mouth), referring apparently to its size and inaccessibility, and to a large ravine running down its side. There is also a belief that Saddle Peak was the place of *Pū·luga-*'s[3] residence prior to the deluge.

823 3. The formation of rocks, valleys, hills, &c., they attribute to
●825 the will of *Pū·luga-*, but they assign the sources of the streams containing oxide of iron, *kòi·ob-chū·lnga-*, and the olive-coloured mineral, *chū·lnga-*, to the action of a poisonous snake, called *lâ·raba-*, well known to them.[4]

103 4. The names they give to the natural forms of land and water are as follows:—

Cape (point)—*tô·ko-chô·ronga-* [*chô·ronga-* = nose].
Isthmus—*tô·to-kī·nab-* [*kī·nab-* = waist].
Mountain—*bô·roin-*.
Valley—*pâ·rag-*.
Strait—*teg-pâ·rag-*.
Coast (shore)—*īgô·ra-* [*gō·ra-* = strong].
Fore-shore—*kē·wad-* and *bô·roga-*.
Island—*tàrchô·na-*.
Islet—*tōt-kai·cha-*.
Harbour—*elàrū·la-*.
Bay—*kō·bungo-*.
Creek—*jūg-*.[5]

[1] The probable derivation of this name will be given in Part II.

[2] Since amicable relations have been established with the South and Middle Andamanese, several members of these tribes have visited Barren Island by accompanying us in the station steamer. The name by which it is now known to them is *·môla-tàrchô·na-* (*lit.*, Smoke Island), in allusion to the smoke which is almost always to be seen rising from the volcano, and which they account for by saying that it must be due to a fire which *Pū·luga-* kindled.

[3] *Pū·luga* represents to them The Creator. *Vide* "Religious Beliefs, &c.," paragraph 7.

[4] *Vide post* "Superstitions," paragraph 21.

[5] The legendary belief regarding the formation of creeks will be found under "Mythology."

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prior existence, but only as an infant. If a woman who has lost a baby is again about to become a mother, the name borne by the deceased is bestowed on the fœtus, in the expectation that it will prove to be the same child born again. Should it be found at birth that the babe is of the same sex as the one who died, the identity is considered to be sufficiently established, but if otherwise the deceased one is said to be under the *ràu-* (*Ficus laccifera*) in *.châ·ità·n-* (Hades).[1]

18. They have no peculiar ideas in reference to yawning, hiccoughing, spitting, or eructating, and hissing[2] is unknown.

19. To sneeze is auspicious, and therefore regarded with favour. When any one sneezes the bystanders ask, "Who is thinking of you?" to which the person replies by naming some absent friend, or, should he be alone when he sneezes, he says, "Here I am at ——" (naming the place).

20. If they have a dream which they regard as bad, as, for instance, that a canoe was dashed on a reef, or that an accident occurred while pig-hunting, or even if, when awake, they hear two canoes bumping against each other while at anchor, they consider it essential to accept such as a warning, and act accordingly, viz., by taking steps to incur no risk of a misadventure: this is generally accomplished by remaining at home for two or three days.

21. A small striped snake, called *là·raba-*, is supposed to produce the streams of the red oxide of iron, *kòi·ob-chū·lnga-*, and olive-coloured clay, *chū·lnga-*, so much employed by them; the ground for the belief is the alleged fact that this snake, when disturbed, ejects from its tail a whitish fluid, which is of a deadly nature. They declare that the poison is such that it cannot be removed by washing or other means, and that it causes intense pain to the victim, who invariably dies within a few hours.

22. There is a small bird, not yet identified, called by them *pī·chrō·l-*, the meeting with which is looked upon as ominous of an approaching death in their midst. When a woodpecker is heard tapping on a tree he is said to be giving warning of the approach of *ū·chu-*,[3] so they proceed in fear and trembling until the danger is supposed to be past. The notes of the *pai-* and *ràtegi-* (two birds not yet identified) are regarded as a sign that there are enemies in the vicinity. When, therefore, either of these are heard, they at once retrace their steps, if they happen to be on the move, or, should they be in an encampment, they

[1] *Vide ante* "Proper Names," paragraph 1, and *post* "Religious Beliefs, &c.," paragraphs 22 and 23.

[2] This is accounted for by the absence of sibilants in their language (*vide* Appendix A).

[3] A legendary elephant, to be spoken of under "Mythology," paragraph 30.

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787 825 temporarily vacate their huts and remain on the alert with their weapons ready for immediate use. The cry of another bird, called *chē'ra-*, informs them of the approaching visit of a friend. Finally, if while travelling they hear the cawing of a crow, they say they must be near some occupied, or recently abandoned encampment. This belief is doubtless traceable to the fact that these birds are among the principal scavengers of their camping grounds.

776 23. It has been noticed that they will never whistle between sunset and sunrise, and the reason they give is that this sound, more than any other, attracts *ē'rem-chàu'gala* during those hours. When animals behave in an unaccountable manner, especially at night, it is said to be because they see this demon.

773 **Religious Beliefs and Demonology.**—1. I have several times mentioned the Supernatural Beings, *Pū'luga-* and *ē'rem-chàu'gala*, and must now enter more into detail regarding the beliefs held by the Andamanese concerning these and other spirits.

2. Though no forms of worship or religious rites are to be found among them, yet are there certain beliefs regarding powers of good and evil, the Creation, and of a world beyond the grave, which show that even these savages have traditions more or less approximating the truth, but whence derived will ever remain a mystery.

3. It is extremely improbable that their legends were the result of the teaching of missionaries or others who might be supposed to have landed on their shores in by-gone years; for not only have they no tradition of any foreigners having settled in their midst and intermarried with their ancestors, or even of having so far established amicable intercourse as to be able to acquire a knowledge of any one of their languages, but our own records, so far from differing from theirs on these points, tend clearly to show that, from the earliest times till so recently as 1858, these islanders have been more or less universally regarded as cannibals, in consequence of which they were much dreaded by all navigating the adjacent seas. The persistency with which they resisted with showers of arrows all attempts to land on their shores,[1] precludes the belief that any one, prior to our settlement,[2] would from choice have visited these islanders in the vain hope of reclaiming them from their savage state, and in order to teach them the Biblical, Mahomedan, or other versions of the Creation, Fall, Deluge, &c.; while it may surely be

[1] The probable cause of their hostility will be explained in a later section (*vide post* "Trade, &c.," paragraph 1).

[2] In 1870 an orphanage was established at Ross Island (Port Blair) for children of the aborigines, but it is very doubtful whether even the more intelligent of the inmates have obtained, much less retained, more than an elementary knowledge of the outline of the truths of Christianity.

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implement, and all take a share in the feast.[1] Meat thus prepared will keep good for several days.

32. I alluded just now to their method of preparing the seeds of the *Semecarpus* and *Artocarpus chaplasha* for consumption during the rains; it is as follows:—The outer husk, or skin, having been removed, a quantity of the fruit is placed on a wooden platter, and each person present renders assistance by partially sucking (!) the various pieces, which, after this preliminary process, are half boiled in water, and then wrapped up in large bundles of leaves, and buried in moist soil; no mark is made over the spot, but there appears to be no fear of forgetting it, though several weeks usually elapse before the monsoon breaks, and these decaying deposits are dug up, when the smell, as may be supposed, is most offensive to all but those who are to the manner born; by them, however, strange to relate, it is evidently highly appreciated. The next stage through which the seeds have to pass consists in freeing them in water from the decaying matter, and drying them in the sun, or over the fire, where they are left in nets (*chā·panga-*[2]) or leaves until required for use, when they are again baked. With this exception no food is dried in the sun, nor is anything salted or intentionally smoked, though this last cannot fail to be, to some extent, the result of their mode of storing food, as described in the previous paragraph.

33. Besides the various fruits already mentioned as in season during the dry months, yams and honey are very abundant; as their method of treating both fruits and yams has been already described, it now remains for me to notice the ingenious way in which they procure honey, and to name the special trees which, flowering in succession, afford ample material from whence the bees produce a more or less abundant store.

34. At the close of the monsoon one of the large jungle trees, called by them *rār-* (*Eugenia* sp.), comes into bloom, and though no honey is made from its flowers, it is said to act beneficially on the bees as a purgative, and to prepare them for the commencement of the honey season.[3] The *lē·kera-* (*Leguminosæ* sp.), blossoming a little later, is the first honey-yielding flower; the *dū·mla-*,[4] *chī·lib-* (*? Diospyros densiflora*), *ó·ro-* (*Chickrassia tabularis*), and *châ·dak-* (*Rubiaceæ*) coming next into season, enable the bees to produce large combs, but the finest are found after the *pâ-* (*Semecarpus*), *bâ·ji-* (*Sterculia* (?) *villosa*), *yē·re-* (*Sterculia* sp.), *jī·dga-*,[4] have

[1] *Vide post* "Hunting and Fishing," paragraphs 30 and 31.
[2] *Vide* Appendix B, item 22.
[3] Hence *re·rke*, (to) clean.
[4] The botanical names of these have not as yet been ascertained.

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blossomed: this is considered the height of the honey season, and is called *lad·u chàu-*.[1] It appears that on moonlight nights just at this time the bees consume a great portion of their honey, so that the "junglees" declare it to be useless to go for combs, either by day or night, until the moon has sensibly waned.

35. When about to make a raid on the hives, the Andamanese procure a certain plant, believed to be of the *Alpinia* species, called *jī·ni-*, and having stripped off the leaves, chew the stem and smear the essence thus extracted over their bodies; the mouth is also filled with the same juice, and thus armed *cap-à-pie* they proceed to disperse the bees, who, on attempting to attack them, are at once repelled by the obnoxious odour of the *jī·ni-*, emitted in a fine spray from the mouths, and also attaching to the persons of their despoilers, who sometimes make further use of the chewed stalks of the offensive plant in driving off the last remaining defenders of the hive.

36. Small combs[2] of both the white and black honey are commonly obtainable till about September—*i.e.*, so long as the *Dipterocarpus lævis*, the *Pterocarpus dalbergioides*, and a few other trees continue to blossom.[3]

37. While I had charge of the homes (and probably ever since), a large sum was annually realised by the aborigines towards their support from the sale of honey thus obtained to the free residents at Port Blair. So much indeed did they collect that we were able to store it in barrels and bottles, and generally found we had sufficient to meet all demands until the approach of the following season.

Tabu.—1. Besides the articles of food from which all abstain during the *â·kà-yâp-*,[4] we have seen that there are certain fruits, edible roots, &c., which, in supposed obedience to *Pū·luga-*'s commands, are not gathered at prescribed seasons of the year,[5] and that mourners[6] (*â·kà-ōg-*) also deny themselves by refusing to partake of their favourite viands until after the *t'ī-tó·latnga-*;[7] but beyond these restrictions, which are of general application,

[1] *Vide* Appendix H.

[2] The combs produced from the blossoms of the under-mentioned trees—*i.e.*: *.tâ·tib-* (*Croton argyratus*), *.bi·bi-* (*Terminalia* (?) *citrina*), and *.bal·ya-* are much less plentiful, and they are smaller; this is also found to be the case with those made from the *.chá·langa-* (*Pterocarpus dalbergioides*), *.tó·nag-* (*Messua ferrea*), *.ē·mej-* (*Terminalia bialata*), *.já-* (*Gluta longipetiolata*), and *.púb-* (*Lagerstræmia hypoleuca* (?) *regina*).

[3] As they are not, in their savage state, in the habit of storing honey, they are without any but the black honey during a great portion of the year.

[4] *Vide ante* "Initiatory Ceremonies," paragraphs 2 and 10.

[5] *Vide ante* "Superstitions," paragraph 12.

[6] If the mourners are *ē·rem-tá·ga-* they abstain from pork, and if they are *àryó·to-* they abjure turtle (*vide ante* "Death and Burial," paragraph 4).

[7] *Vide ante* "Death and Burial," paragraph 7.

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remarks, I am persuaded that he has credited them with more intelligence on this point than they possess.

11. The origin of the belief appears to be traceable to the fact that they generally in former times tipped their arrow-heads with fish-bones,[1] more particularly the serrated tail-bone of the sting-ray, which, as is well known, is capable of inflicting a very serious wound in consequence of the liability of the fine brittle spikes to break off and remain in the flesh after the extraction of the arrow, thereby causing, in the majority of cases, bad ulcers, which, in the absence of skilful treatment, frequently resulted in the sufferer's death.[2]

12. The maladroitness of strangers who have failed even to bend the Andamanese bows[3] has apparently been due to their having held the wrong end uppermost, for, so far from there being any difficulty in using even their strongest bows, it has been proved that after a little practice Europeans are able to compete almost on even terms with all but the few "crack" shots among the aborigines, provided at least that the object aimed at be stationary; but they less readily acquire the skill which the Andamanese display in rapid shooting, and in discharging the arrow with the full force of which it is capable.

13. The large bows (from 5½ to 7 feet long) are constructed chiefly for ornament and presentation to friends, and are seldom used except for shooting fish and pigs along the shore. The smaller kinds are preferred in jungle expeditions, and on most other occasions, as they are more convenient and also more easily replaced in case of accident, less time and trouble being required for their manufacture.

14. One of the chief drawbacks to the bows used by these tribes is that they cannot be fired in silence,[4] in consequence

moisten them with saliva, the inmates of the homes—who are those chiefly employed as jungle police—now eat *salt* with their food, which was never the case fifteen or twenty years ago. Whether, assuming the story to be true, the effect can be accounted for by the circumstance stated, or, as seems more probable, is due to the improvement in the physical condition of the convicts since the early days of the settlement, is a question for medical authorities to decide.

[1] Writing nearly a century ago, Colebrooke mentioned that "their arrows are headed with fish-bones, or the tusks of wild hogs; sometimes merely with a sharp bit of wood, hardened in the fire, but these are sufficiently destructive." [The *fibula* (*ar-pê'ti-*) of the pig was also used for the same purpose.]

[2] *Vide* footnote to Appendix B, item 53.

[3] *Vide* Mouat, p. 321. Had Dr. Mouat's remarks applied to the Little Andaman or other *jărawa-* bows, which are of totally different construction (*vide* Plate VI), they would have been more readily understood, for even the aborigines of Great Andaman have experienced much difficulty in shooting with the few specimens of this weapon which have fallen into their hands; doubtless, therefore, much knack and practice, as well as strength, are needed in using them.

[4] From this defect the *jărawa-* bow appears to be exempt which is easily

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283 286 thigh, and the cuticle is removed by means of the *Cyrena* shell; the underlying white fibres are left for a week or ten days in the sun until thoroughly dry, when they separate readily, and are easily worked up into fine or coarse twine, as may be required by the manipulator.

283 824 3. The fibre of the *Anodendron paniculatum* (*yō·lba-*) is chiefly used for making bowstrings, reticules (*chá·panga-*), necklaces, and twine for arrow fastenings; its manufacture is accordingly not restricted to either sex. When the bark has been stripped off, in lengths of 8 to 15 inches, the operator presses the inner portion upon his (or her) thigh, and then rapidly but carefully passes a *Cyrena* shell along the outer surface until the fibres alone remain; these are then, as in the previous cases, dried in the sun, or before a fire; when a sufficient supply of material has been thus obtained, it is made into fine twine or, if not required for immediate use, wrapped in leaves in order that it may be kept fresh. Although apparently free [262] from any obnoxious properties, this plant, as well as the fibres obtained therefrom, until it is converted into twine or bowstrings, is believed by the Andamanese to render the flesh of a turtle uneatable if placed near it; consequently this meat, when inadvertently so contaminated, is thrown away; further, no one who has been collecting *yō·lba-*, or who has been engaged in preparing the fibre, can (for a period extending to three days) be allowed to cook a turtle, or even to accompany a party engaged [845] on a turtling expedition! Sharks and other dangerous fish are also credited with having so wholesome a horror or detestation of this plant (and also of *Cyrena* shells!) that the aborigines are in the habit of attaching some *yō·lba-*, or *Cyrena* shells (or both), to their cinctures as a safeguard when about to swim in parts believed to be infested by these creatures.

[531] 4. The yellow skin of the root of a certain orchid, called *rá-*, which is commonly found on trees near the shore, is often seen intertwined with their *yō·lba-* string, in personal ornaments, and occasionally in the decoration of weapons, but where strength is a requisite it is of course not used.

5. Bowstrings of *pī·lita-* and *yō·lba-* are made in the manner described in the manufacture of *al·ga-* rope, but ordinary string is made in the following manner:—a few of the prepared filaments are twisted into a yarn on the thigh with the palm of the hand; when two lengths have been obtained, they are together rolled into string of the desired strength, and beeswax is smeared over it to make assurance doubly sure.

6. Twine, made from the *yō·lba-*, is used in netting the fine chains (*rá·l-*[1]) and the reticules (*chá·panga-*[2]); for turtle-

[1] *Vide ante* "Death and Burial," paragraph 5, and Appendix B, item 42.
[2] *Vide* Appendix B, item 22.

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(*r*) Used for making canoes.
(*s*) Resin used in manufacture of *kâ·ngatâ-bŭj-* (*vide* Appendix B, item 62).
(*t*) Used in making the *gŏb-*, *kai-*, and sometimes the *tŏg-* (*vide* Appendix B, items 82, 80, and 10).
(*u*) Generally used for making paddles, and the leaves for bedding.
(*v*) Used for making shaft of hog-spear.
(*w*) Used for making baskets, fastenings of adzes, turtle-spears, torches (*tŏ·ug-*), and of bundles; also for suspending buckets, for stitching cracks in canoes, and in thatching.
(*x*) Used for making canoes; the resin is employed in making torches.
(*y*) Used for making canoes, pails, and eating trays.

APPENDIX M.

LIST OF SHELLS AND SHELL FISH COMMONLY KNOWN TO THE ANDAMANESE.

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Andamanese name.	Scientific name.[1]	Remarks.
l·d· ·ŏ·la- (*x*)	Monodonta (? labeo).	
lad·g·ŏ·la- (*a*)	Delphinula laciniata.	
*bŏ·..	Pecten (?) Indica ..	Scallop.
chă·pata- (*b*)	Pteroceras chiragra ..	Scorpion shell.
chăn·ga lŏt chŏ·kul- ..	Murex tribulus.	
chej- (also *chŏ·la-*) ..	Pinna (? squamosa) ..	Bouquet-holder shell.
·hi·d·· (*b*)..	Pinna (?)	
*ch·kot·..	? Conus eburneus.	
c·.·rom- (*a*)	Scolymus cornigerus.	
chŏ·wai- (*a*)	Tridacna crocea.	
chŭ- (*a*)	Murex (? palma-rosæ) ..	Rose-bud shell.
ĕ·la-	Perna ephippium.	
gar·en-	Dentalium octogonum.	
gar·en-ŏ·la- (*a*)	Turbo (?)..	Top-shell.
ĭ·wa-ŏ·la- (*a*)	Nassa (? tœnia)	Dog-whelk.
jăr·awa ·.·la- (*a*) ..	Purpura Persica.	
jĭ·rkă-ŭ-	Cyrena (?)	
jŏ·rol- (*b*)	Cerithidea telescopium.	
jŭ·ru-wia lă·kâ bang- ..	Solen vagina	Razor-fish.
kă·mrŭj-	Trochus (? obeliscus).	
kâ·rada-	Arca granosa.	
kŏ·nop- (*a*)	Tridacna squamosa.	
l·do-	Turbo marmoratus ..	Is eaten by the *bal·awa-* tribe only.
l·ta- (*a*)	Cassis glaucus	Helmet-shell.
mal·to- (*a*)	Venus (?)	
mă·ed- (*a*)	Venus meroë	Pattern-shot Venus.
măr·eno- (*a*)	Patella variabilis ..	Rock-limpet.

[1] To the Rev. T. L. J. Warneford, formerly chaplain at the Andamans, I am indebted for the classical names of many of the shells in this list.
(*a*) denotes those that are cooked and eaten.
(*b*) denotes those that are cooked and eaten by *married* persons only.

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Andamanese name.	Scientific name.	Remarks.
nyĕ'red-	Mitra adusta	Mitre-shell.
ó'do-	Nautilus (? zic-zac).	
ó'la- (*a*)	Cerithium (? nodulosum).	
ó'log-	Strombus (? pugilis).	
pai'dek- (*a*)	Arca (? barbata).	
pail- (*b*)	Mytilus smaragdinus ..	Sea-mussel.
pai'lta- (*b*)	Pharus (?)	
páp-ó'la- (*a*)	Turbo porphyreticus.	
pĕ'te- (*a*)	Circe (?)	
pó'rma- (*a*)	Arca (?)	
pü'luga làr á'lang- ..	Dolium latelabris (? also galea).	
rĕ'keto-	Hemicardium unedo.	
rŭ'kta- (*b*)	Cyrena (?)	
tă'ra-ó'la- (*a*)	Natica albumen.	
tai'lig-pü'nur-	Conus (? nobilis).	
teb- (*a*)	Bulla naucum	Bubble-shell.
tĕ'lim-	Cypræa Arabica	Cowry.
„	„ Mauritiana.	
„	„ Talpa.	
„	„ Tigris.	
„	„ Vitellus	
til-	Cassis Madagascariensis (? also tuberosa)	Queen-conch.
tòi'ña-	Ostrea (?)	Eaten many years ago but not now.
tĭ'a- (*a*)	Trochus Niloticus.	
ŭ- (*a*)	Cyrena (?)	
ŭ'chup-	Conus textile	Cone shell.
ŭ'yo-	? Turbinella pyrum, *or* Pyrula (? ficus)	Shank shell.
wal- (*b*)	Spondylus (?)	Thorny oyster.
wá'ngata- (*a*)	Arca (? granosa).	
wóp- (*b*)	Ostrea (?)	Oyster.
yá'dā làr ĕ'te- (*a*) ..	Haliotis glabra (*also* „ asininus)	Ear-shell.

Mr Subramanian of the Forest Department and Mr Majid's young son also accompanied us. We reached Bumila Creek on the north eastern coast of the Little Andaman at about 3 P.M. and having sighted an Andamanese hut we decided to anchor the launch there. The beach was about 2 miles from the place of anchorage. We took out a small boat and rowed to the beach and reached the hut at about 4 P.M. It was found to be abandoned but there were signs of human occupation and within a few yards a water-hole was discovered. A broken canoe, with a single out-rigger was found close to the hut (*see* Plate I, Fig. 1). Burnt coal and smouldering ashes in the centre of the hut showed that it was probably deserted by the Aborigines as soon as they had sighted us. After making a careful inspection of the place we returned to our launch and decided to anchor there for the night. Unfortunately the choppy sea and the strong current coming from the Bumila Creek tossed our small boat throughout the whole night, as a result of which all of us had an uncomfortable time.

We left southwards towards Hut Bay early in the morning and as we moved along the coast we sighted another Onge hut. This did not seem to be deserted as we saw a few people moving about. We decided to stop there and investigate. We took out a boat and moved towards the coast with such presents as we had brought from Port Blair on the advice of the Chief Commissioner. When we got near the coast, we left the boat and walked for about a furlong through coral beds finally reaching the shore. The hut was found to be circular in shape and not too large, and was occupied by 2 adult females, 1 adult male and a young boy. The adult male, *Ukla*, was the father of the young boy and husband of the younger woman. The older woman was his mother-in-law. These people appeared very friendly. We gave them presents we had brought and took photographs and made drawings of their hut. In addition, full anthropometric measurements were taken by me and blood was taken from fingers for typing by Mr Sarkar. Ukla was able to speak a few Hindi words and we gathered that he had been to Port Blair and knew Mr Bonington, formerly of the Forest Department, Andaman Islands. We found in front of the hut, hanging from a large tree the skull and mandible of a Dugong (*see* Plate I, Figs. 3 & 4). We enquired about its significance from Ukla, but unfortunately his knowledge of Hindi was not sufficient to explain it to us. We learned from him, however, that the name of the village was *Laito*. After making friendly gestures, we returned to 'Molly' and proceeded immediately towards Hut Bay. At about noon time while we were having our lunch, we suddenly saw three outrigger canoes (of single outrigger type) coming towards us, each carrying about 4 Onges. We signalled to them and they came to our launch and tied their canoes with it and came on board. The men appeared to be friendly and not afraid of us. Our greatest difficulty, however, was language, as we could not make ourselves understood as none of the crew or any other member including Mr Subramaniam of the Forest Department knew that language. There was one man who seemed to occupy a position of authority among these men, and was painted with red and yellow ochre on the forehead, arms and breast. The

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spot for centuries leads to the formation of kitchen-middens [1]. In the temporary camps something similar happens: the only difference consists in the fact that rubbish dumps only accumulate at the back of the temporary shelters, as a consequence of their peculiar shape that I shall not describe here. These dumps are heaven-sent love nests for insects of many species, mostly flies of a metallic green colour. They follow the Onge from camp to camp and thrive on scraps from human meals. When travelling in Little Andaman I was unmistakably warned of the nearby presence of Onge camps by the appearance of those familiar living beings.

The filth that coats the floors of communal Onge huts offers an ideal breeding ground also for myriads of fleas. Dogs spread them all over Little Andaman. Owing to the fact that the communal huts are deserted for months at a time during the dry season, the fleas become hungry and assault human beings vehemently whenever possible. When visiting empty communal huts I myself, and the persons with me, were plagued by such assaults. Fleas advanced suddenly from feet to head in thick, shimmering brown layers, covering first our legs. We were obliged to strip and douse ourselves with insect-repellents. As for other parasites, including ticks and mosquitos, equally plentiful in Little Andaman, the Onge do not appear to be inconvenienced by them.

The communal huts are used for another purpose as well, unhygienic but of high ethnological interest: the interment of human corpses. When they die, the inmates are buried beneath their beds. In other words, communal huts are also cemeteries. Many human skeletons are found by digging under the beds. Until 1952 this fact was unknown about the Andaman Islanders although it is encountered in all Onge communal huts without exception. An analysis of this custom led to further discoveries: the Onge wish to compel the spirit of a deceased person to remain close to the living as a protection, so they offer it the communal hut for an abode, the idea being that a spirit cannot wander far from the bones of its former body. A series of Onge practices point to this belief: felled enemies must be burned and reduced to ashes in order to render them harmless. Their hostile souls, according to the Onge, rise toward the sky in smoke as the bones are consumed. For the same reason, bones of relatives are fashioned into necklaces. The most conspicuous of these is the *ibidanghe*, worn generally by women and young girls, which is made from a decorated human jawbone. The aim is to obtain the assistance of the departed relation in fighting illness and bad luck. Direction in hunting, fishing and even quarrelling is supposed to come from the dead kept close to the living. We can trace this belief on the connection between bones and souls to a remote origin: Southern Asia megaliths had, in my opinion, no other cause for offering shelter to spirits and promoting useful relations between the living and the dead. I reached this conclusion after studying the contemporary habits of Travancore mountain and other Indian tribes, particularly the Munda. In Nias we find traces of the same customs as among different peoples of Indonesia and Oceania, who

[1] I discussed this at the two international anthropological congresses of 1952 (Vienna) and 1956 (Philadelphia), and have more to say on the subject in my book about the Onge.

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now follow them, often ignoring their original significance and symbolism. Among the Onge, spirits are feared but not loved ; the same applies to God Himself.

The Onge bury their dead in trenches, no deeper than three feet. Earth is tightly packed over the graves in order to prevent exhalations. Full details on the subject of Onge burial customs appear in the book that I am writing about the Onge. I slept with the Onge in communal huts that contained fresh graves, without suffering any inconvenience from the smell of the corpses. This recalls the palaeolithic sepulchral caves, where man probably lived as the Onge live in their sepulchral huts today.

There are no latrines near Onge camps – whether permanent or temporary. Excrements are spread carelessly all around, lightly covered with leaves and earth. Flies lay eggs on them. The Onge's only precaution is not to defecate where drinking water might be found after rainfall. With so many opportunities for reproduction, in some places flies form such clouds as to impress the natives themselves. In the north of Little Andaman a creek was named after the flies : Bumila Creek, which means "fly creek". Smells also occasionally inspire geographical names : Tambe-é-bûie, on the north-east coast of Little Andaman, means "the smelly place" in the Onge language. Flies, fleas and ticks are tolerated by the Onge who do not fight them. Fortunately, the hymenoptera collect flies for their nests, not, however, in quantities large enough to compete with the fertility of the species.

2. Clothing and personal care

The only garment worn by Little Andaman women is the *naquinēghē*, a scanty grasslike apron covering the genitals. In addition, during menstrual periods, Onge women wear the *bataghē*, for hygienic purposes. This is a simple cluster of long, soft green leaves cut by the husband for his wife from special trees : Myristica longifolia and others. The only leaves used are those from the end of a stalk, a section of which is left attached to the leaves. The stalk is slipped under the *naquinēghē*, while the long leaves are passed between the thighs to be fastened at the back above the buttocks. It is curious to see Onge women in such myristical attire ! The *bataghē* is ethnographical news, new not only as regards the Andamans : it is an interesting indication of the hygienic measures employed by primitive people, and can probably be traced to prehistoric practices in analogous circumstances. The continental and insular regions nearest to the Andamans have retained no similar custom ; their only practice is the strict isolation of menstruating women. Among the Onge, on the other hand, they are allowed free circulation. Washing is unknown to the Onge : they never wash their bodies intentionally. Brushing through the thick forest and diving into the sea or the river to collect food substitute adequately for washing. The Little Andaman forest is nearly always dripping ; moving among the trees, specially in the early morning, is equivalent to bathing. The contact of wet leaves when walking cleans the Onge's skin, for they go naked ; and as they constantly dive into the sea and rivers, they do not smell. Actually they give an impression of cleanliness – as opposed to many other dark-skinned

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ing edible matter; furthermore, they don't care to take the trouble as food is generally plentiful. We must also realize that they find salt repulsive. Even honey – so easily kept for many months – is disposed of, if possible, on the very same day it is collected. Incredible quantities of this or other food may be consumed for days and nights on end until everything disappears. Very few of the islanders care to vary their meat diet with an occasional diet of vegetables in order to disintoxicate the system; yet nourishing yams and other roots grow wild and plentiful. They are so rich in carbohydrates that I preferred them to potatoes and rice. I may add that the Onge, on my request, brought me yams and roots that they were glad to barter with rice, tea and sugar – soon declared by their wise men to possess medicinal properties.

The Onge's stomach, intestines and general physiological equilibrium suffer from lack of salt and such bad nutritional habits as those described. They damage the human body, together with unrestrained sexual activity.

One highly unhygienic custom of the Onge is the use, all over Little Andaman, of peculiar sucking-sticks. These pass from mouth to mouth during the frequent meat or honey orgies indulged in by the natives.

When boiling pork or turtle, a quantity of liquid fat floats on the surface of the broth. Though the Onge despise the broth, they don't like to waste the fat. So they devised an efficient solution: they suck the fat up by means of a wad of absorbent matter obtained by chewing the end of a fibrous stick selected among many species of trees in the forest. The end of the stick is chewed along a section of 5 cms, the remaining part – about 25 cms long and 2 cms thick – is used as a handle to prevent the fingers from burning.

In every Onge camp sucking-sticks are permanently in evidence owing to the inmates' frequent ingestion of liquid fat or honey. A second version of the sucking-stick consists in a narrow, cotton-like strip, up to 80 cms long, with only a small part of the original wood remaining. This serves as a handle for dipping the stick into a wooden barrel full of honey. In both instances the same tool passes for hours from mouth to mouth: from older people to greedy children, anxious to suck the coveted delicacy off the stick that has been dipped into the pot. The rapid spreading of epidemics, which often occur in the Andamans, is certainly encouraged by the use of these sucking-sticks. I found no reference to this practice in books on the Andaman Islands.

Everything they eat, particularly meat, the Onge consider as either remedial or harmful. They are therefore chary of accepting proffered food if it is unknown to them. When I brought 30 Onge to Port Blair to introduce them to Dr. Rajendra Prasad, President of the Indian Republic, they were troublesome about food. In Port Blair it was not as easy as in Little Andaman to procure whole pigs; sometimes only pieces were available. The Andamanese Forest Department was quickly informed of the difficulty and kindly supplied the desired animals. In moments of shortage I tried to give the Onge cooked lamb, goat, chicken and pigeons; they resolutely refused them as unhealthy. Birds are never eaten by the Onge, who consider them shelters for human souls

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and therefore dangerous to offend by cooking them. Luckily they accepted fish of almost every description, and vegetables. To convince them of our good intentions concerning their food, at Port Blair an Onge observer was stationed permanently near the kitchen to watch the preparation of meals. Nevertheless, within a few days all 30 Onge fell ill as a consequence of the different food and climate. In their island they sleep, completely naked and uncovered, lying directly on beds made of rough branches. Their only precaution, as I mentioned before, is to keep a fire permanently burning close to the bed. This was not feasible in the rooms with wooden floors that were provided for them in Port Blair, and blankets did not avail. So the 30 Onge developed a fever and we were obliged to take them urgently back to Little Andaman, where they promptly recovered. The incident gave me a further opportunity to observe the curative methods of the Onge.

With regard to their care to avoid illness from food, I must point out the fact that misleading information has been published on the subject even in reputed papers on the Andamans. I will discuss them in my Onge book, but I wish here to briefly stress a few points: the Onge, and the present residual coastal or forest Andamanese, refuse to eat – besides birds and fish such as shark, ray, eel or muraenae – some other animals such as paradoxurus, bats, rats, varanus and snakes. The contrary is affirmed in those papers. To quote the well-known book by A. R. RADCLIFFE-BROWN ("The Andaman Islanders", pp. 37, 91 and 389), all Andaman Islanders, including the Onge, consider the above-mentioned species edible. Varanus is supposed to be acceptable for its lustful habits that make of it an aphrodisiac. My direct and protracted experience both in Little and in Great Andaman compels me to state that such information is false. It is true, however, that the Andaman Islanders believe they acquire some of the properties of their devoured victims. This occurs only if the animals are cut up alive. Therefore turtles, pigs and dugongs are cruelly sectioned while still alive, and the Onge also believe that their health and energy profit by it. Cannibalism may be founded on such beliefs, but it is completely unknown to Andaman Islanders of all times and places. Young sucking-pigs are avoided, as food, by men, and even withheld from the dogs; but the Onge are partial to other things which, in our opinion, are far worse: crickets, and the fat larvae of coleoptera that collect in tree trunks.

Without giving here a full list of the foods that are considered harmful or curative, I shall add just a few remarks on the subject. The healthiest, as well as the tastiest part of the pig is supposed to be the kidney and its surrounding fat. It is offered to old or distinguished people, as a sign of favour. As I helped the Onge, as much as possible, with gifts of tools and medicines, they found it complimentary to name me after their favorite titbit, intending thereby to honour me as a friend and healer. By such a name I came to be known in Little Andaman, and this made my work easier. In the Onge language the word for kidney fat is *cue-changhēghē*; I was delighted with it, for it proclaimed the high esteem I was held in by my Onge friends.

Foods considered healthy by the Onge include honey, yams, several succulent roots and the fat of turtle and dugong. Pteropus, a giant bat very

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common in the Andamans, said by RADCLIFFE-BROWN (p. 273) to be eaten by the Andaman Islanders as a protection against rheumatism, is never killed. For some superstitious reason the Onge are simply horrified at the thought of touching such an enormous flying bat. Among the fruits, those of a plant whose wood has such a revolting smell that it is known, in English, as "stool-tree", are believed to have exceptional protective properties for the human body. The fruits themselves smell even worse than the wood, but this, to the Onge, makes them appetizing rather than disgusting. Concerning honey, and the many sugary fruits of the jungle that are available all the year round, the Onge luckily ignore the simple method of distilling alcohol. No intoxicating drink reaches Little Andaman from the outer world, whereas in Great Andaman alcohol, together with imported syphilis, was one of the main causes of depopulation. No syphilis appears as yet to have reached Little Andaman. This is also confirmed by the research carried out by Dr. HERMANN LEHMANN of London's St. Bartholomew's Hospital, during February 1953 in my Onge camp in Labanare (north-east coast of Little Andaman).

II. Effects on the People's Lives

The islanders die young, specially the men. The majority of them succumb before reaching the age of 20; most of the survivors die between 20 and 40; the rest – with a very few exceptions – before 50. Women, after marriage, follow a similar pattern: the death rate among women, however, is slightly different owing to a less corrosive sexual life. Some women may live to the age of sixty, but both sexes age soon, appearing older than their years when still in their twenties. The short Onge span of life recalls conditions which apparently prevailed among prehistoric and protohistoric men. Palaeolithic man died at an earlier age than modern man. The Onge today, in many respects, behaves as palaeolithic man behaved countless centuries ago. – Infant mortality is high; the first five days of life are the most critical for the Onge, owing, in part, to the hard life led by mothers even during pregnancy, which often causes functional damage to the placenta. Delivery is generally easy and traumatic injury rarely occurs; but premature births are common, and so are malformations and other anomalies. Imperfect infants are quickly eliminated by their parents. As a result, only a small number of children are allowed to grow up, but these appear normal. There are no blind and no deaf-and-dumb people in Little Andaman. I saw only two instances of incipient lameness: in an unmarried boy of about twenty and in a young married woman. Only robust infants can survive.

The Onge, so careful about their food, are completely indifferent to something else that is considered very harmful in continental and insular regions close to the Andamans. There, menstruating women are often segregated and considered harmful to the entire community. Not so in Little Andaman, where the remedies applied in the circumstance are extremely primitive (cf. supra) and could probably be traced to palaeolithic man. I saw nothing

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documented the fact in a number of photographs. The purpose, however, is purely hygienic: an unpainted body is, in their opinion, exposed to certain illness. They explained this belief to me by saying that without paint the body becomes "hot". The men who travelled with me far from women were anxious every day to spread clay on face, chest and limbs, just to avoid "heat" or, in other words, fever. I thought of malaria, but they do not suffer from it. Of this I will speak later on.

Rough clay is applied daily, on infant bodies as well as on adults, for health purposes. It is used to cure all kinds of sickness, together with ochre, turtle fat and honey. Honey spread on wounds appears to hasten healing. Identical curative methods are employed in Oceania. They probably existed among the Tasmanians, and are still used in Australia by the aborigines. I found nothing of the kind in Africa, where honey is plentiful. The Onge consider clay, ochre, honey and turtle fat good for external and internal treatment alike – both preventive and curative. Powdered bees' wax of a dark colour is often added. I saw mothers give their children, as a laxative, a number of pills made of similar ingredients. No bigger than common hazelnuts, the pills are red and greasy. In Onge forests I saw some small excavations, a few feet deep, made to extract the medicinal clay from special ground pockets. In its natural form the clay is light coloured, powdery and free of stones. When it is burnt the colour changes, assuming red, yellow, whitish or black shades according to the different qualities used, all believed to possess healing properties and to ensure hygienic colouring of the body. Mixed as described above, clay is used by the Onge in every circumstance from fever to snake or scorpion bite, constipation, breast infection in women, or post-delivery bleeding.

Belief in the medicinal properties of clay is as old as humanity itself. Even among contemporary European peoples, notwithstanding severe criticism, clay is still honoured as health-giving, not, I must say, on wholly foolish grounds. The Onge, who smear their bodies constantly with clay, have the softest, most velvety skin that I ever saw anywhere in the world. Wounds spread with clay mixed with honey and fat leave negligible scars. The laxative and germ-killing action of clay is admitted by physicians in many countries, including Europe. It never causes infection. Geophagism has ancient origins, and we find it practiced by many modern populations. Children of every race and all young wild animals lick clay instinctively to absorb the mineral salts required by a developing organism. The Onge habit of using clay for healing purposes can be set, therefore, in a very wide frame.

Mental and nervous disorders are rare in Little Andaman. Few natives are subject to epilepsy – an important matter for the Onge: they consider such people as possessed by spirits who speak through their mouths, and respectfully question them as oracles. Several Onge chiefs, such as Chief Tchôtâ of Tambĕ-ĕ-buiĕ, are apt to go into trances that have all the appearance of epileptic fits. They were elected chiefs on the strength of their epilepsy!

Constant exercise keeps eyesight and hearing extremely sharp in the Onge. I saw no single case of myopia or presbyopia among the natives, nor

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the felling of the tree, chiselling the lumber and processing it further to give the shape of a canoe. Buckets of wood are also constructed by them from the softwood tree. Two types of baskets are made, the smaller ones are more well-finished than the bigger ones. The former is known as *tolevaga* and the later *tole-laya*. Such activities have introduced the use of dahs, chisels, and iron files among the Onges, from the iron pieces derived from the sea shores. The other important pieces of their craftsmanship are the beautiful weavings of fibre, tussel of yellow fibre used by the women in their front. However, the art of making the earthen pots has been completely forgotten.

The leisure in their lives has helped the development of some amount of aesthetic senses among the Onges. All the Onges men and women shave their heads with flakes of glass, obtained from the sea-borne glass bottles. The body of the Onges are also painted with white clay which save their skin from insect-bite while red paint serves medicinal purposes if some individual is having fever. In times of mourning, red orchre paint is a taboo.[1]

Early marriage is the custom. The widows are looked down upon by the society. Some incidents of widow murder and drowning are heard. In the married life, the husband is devoted to his wife and both the husband and wife work for collecting their food.

Dances and songs are in vogue and there are practically songs for every occasion and activity. Most of their songs are more plaintive than joyous.

There are three broad divisions of the Onges of the Little Andaman :

(1) *Giremeka-Gobeule* group inhabiting the northeastern coast of the island ;

(2) *Engakwale group* live in the interior of the islands ; and

(3) *Gireraragobeule group* live in the southern and western coasts of the islands.

In spite of all the limitations, the Onges have been considered as one of the happiest people of the world with plenty of food and water to eat and drink and with very few social cankers to fight with. But as is common to all other aborigines of the Andamans, a decline in their number is discernible.

The Sentinelese

The Sentinelese are the least known of all the aborigines of the Anda-

1 The Onge of the Little Andaman—A short guide book ; Anthropological Gallery, Indian Museum, Calcutta.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

105 gathering society; it is extremely probable that a study of their daily life today is virtually equivalent to a study of their life as it was in ancient times.

231 241 177 So near are the Andamanese to their original state that they show no signs of ever having had any real agriculture. The Indian Government has tried in vain to induce the surviving Arioto to keep chickens by presenting them with birds and food for them; the gifts were accepted out of politeness, but there the matter ended. Among the remaining Negritos, however, particularly in the Philippines, there are noticeable signs of the awakening of some agricultural sense, even to the extent of some commerce, and regular attendance at markets. But on Little Andaman, for example, I saw in 1952 various ginger trees growing, brought there by some unknown means and at Entigheh there was also a pumpkin. In 1953 and subsequent years there were no pumpkins at all on the island, and although the gingers were still thriving they were clearly doing so by chance, without any attention from the Onges, who ate some of the small red fruit, and seemed to like the piquant flavour, but still showed no signs of wanting to perpetuate it. In several places both on the coast and inland I saw, too, clumps of the slender native bamboo, hardly planted intentionally; the ground sites of some huts now abandoned, like Bugheneh and Odadda, were covered in them. The inhabitants had apparently wanted to procure a supply of material for roofing mats, or the drying platforms used by a few groups, and so the plantations were completely stripped – and killed.

245 177 In order to plant coconut trees for the benefit of the islanders I had even to do the planting myself, so utterly ignorant were they of agricultural methods; we even had to do all the clearing of the undergrowth in a patch of forest, and prepare the ground. The Onges watched curiously but were quite uninterested. Why should they care for a tree for ten years to get its nuts when the island and seas around are teaming with food for the taking?

824 825 In their continual search for food the Onges have acquired botanical and zoological knowledge which seems almost innate, and they know of properties in plants and animals of which we are quite unaware. Nearly every day on Little Andaman I came across examples of this. I only had to draw a rough sketch of an animal and they knew at once where it could be found; it was only thanks

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to them that I was able to find the various amphibia which subsequently proved to be new species. They know poisonous and non-poisonous snakes by sight and how to avoid being bitten. They could tell me which trees flowered and when, because they knew this affected the whereabouts and the quality of the honey, and they knew which flowers and roots had medicinal properties. The necessity, in accordance with their superstitions, of keeping their prey alive as long as possible has also given them a somewhat gruesome knowledge of anatomy and physiology. The call of food has also made them weather experts; they know which air currents and winds bring what animals, or cause them to vanish, and what game is likely to haunt what terrain. They could tell me where to find certain fish, or crustacea, or where certain roots or fruit in season were to be found.

The striking feature of their knowledge was that it did not merely relate to what was edible or inedible. Amphibia, reptiles and birds for example, they never eat under any circumstances; but they knew where to find them all for me, and they knew the bird migrations and how these related to the movements of the marine fauna.

Providentially, the exactitude of the Onges' botanical and zoological knowledge is matched by the magnitude of their superstitious fears. Were it not for this all the edible vegetation on the islands would have disappeared long ago as a result of their incredibly thoughtless destruction. The effect, therefore, is almost that of a purely involuntary, embryonic form of 'agriculture', contrasting strangely with their persisting, persistent and complete lack of interest in any formal care, however primitive. The Onges believe that the plants which produce edible roots and tubers belong to a spirit related to Eiuga, whose anger is aroused if he sees his plants being taken; his vengeance is quick and terrible.

There are on Little Andaman a number of creepers with edible fleshy roots, sometimes as thick as a man's wrist, sticking out horizontally at least fifty to sixty centimetres from the main stem, only just below the surface. They invariably grow in light soil, where there are no rocks, and are very easy for the Onges to reach with their digging sticks. These and the yams, sometimes as big as a football, which are to be found everywhere, the Onges have to steal from the spirit who owns them. The creepers themselves,

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their hunting and fishing, or contacts with strangers, which are loudly chanted, accompanied by miming and dancing, during their nocturnal celebrations. One was sung and danced in my honour; Cendubai,[1] head of the Lulera hut, much struck by the sight of me in my hammock slung between two trees on nylon cords, delivered himself of a warning over the danger I was running using such thin cords. At the end of each 'verse' the refrain '*cué-cian-ghégbeébée-chéle*' (he will hurt himself) repeated his fear of the cords breaking.

Hunting and fishing episodes are to the Onges less interesting than themes like my safety, because to them they lack the repetitive refrain. In their dances, on the other hand, they prefer something else, to us monotonous, but for them always new, and even exciting; more than anything they love to dance the stages of courtship to its culmination, with the help of words and extraordinarily (to Western eyes regrettably) vivid gestures.

Birds, to the Onges, harbour the spirits of the dead, and it is for this reason that they are never eaten, contrary to the assertions of Brown.[2] Similar fears extend to lizards, the jungle cats, bats, rats and snakes. I have confirmed this among both the Onges and the Arioto. The latter even refused to eat some fat pigeons which I offered them not knowing of the taboo; they accepted the gifts, but the pigeons were eventually eaten by my own men. And the Onges whom I took with me to Port Blair for a few days refused point blank to eat pigeon or chicken.

The spirits select the Onges' food for them, in the sense that they regard everything as edible or poisonous, according to whether the guardian spirit is benign or malevolent. Given the curious adaptability of the spirits and the intensely practical way in which they operate it is hardly surprising that their benevolence or malignity coincides remarkably well with those foods which tend to promote normal health!

[1] I was sorry to learn that Cendubai died suddenly in 1955 aged barely forty.

[2] Curiously enough, while the Onges' fears lead them to reject out of hand any food of animal origin which is unknown to them, the same does not apply to vegetable foods. They ate half-rotten fruit, which I offered them, even though they had never seen it before, and they clamoured for rice and tea, so much so that in order to prevent them becoming addicted to the rice, as so often happens when primitive peoples meet a new food, I insisted on receiving equal quantities of yams in exchange for the rice and very sweet tea, to slow down their demands.

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regular exercise of the two faculties required by their existence in direct contact with the natural world; anyone, it is said, who lived such a life would preserve the same keenness of eye and ear. Certainly I saw no myopia among the Onges, nor any of the eye infections common among other inhabitants of the tropics. With the naked eye they can pick out tiny craft far out to sea, or the small, narrow Onge canoes which I could hardly see with field-glasses, which makes me doubt whether constant exercise of the eyes can really be the full explanation of their power of vision. They can pick out quickly and accurately birds immobile among the dense leaves in the darkest part of the forest, invisible to me, even though I was used to looking for them and could see them when they moved. And from the ground they saw high in the trees tiny amphibia which I wanted to catch, after I had caught one by chance which had proved to be a new species. These amphibia, perfect mimics, become almost invisible when they attach themselves to the bark of the trees, but the Onges pointed them out to me from a distance with absolute accuracy, and I was in fact able in 1954 to catch over two hundred in a week.[1]

The Onges can also pick out reptiles on the ground, or among the foliage, distinguishing with long practice the poisonous varieties which abound in the islands, and I found it very useful to send Onges ahead of me in the forest to look out for these snakes. When any of my Indians were bitten it was always because they thought they could do as well as the local scouts! The Onges themselves are, however, occasionally bitten, with serious consequences. One of them, aged twenty-five, climbed into a very high tree after honey, and unwittingly put his left hand on a snake hidden in the leaves, where it had climbed to search for birds' eggs. It bit just above the elbow, causing an alarming swelling of the arm with severe pain and fever. He was brought to me semi-conscious, with the whole limb swollen to the size of a rugby ball. The unfortunate man's neck had been bound with the usual strands of *Ficus* bark, and not surprisingly he was groaning desperately, and clearly on the point of death.

The Onges have no specific remedies for snake bites, and their

[1] These amphibia were examined in 1954 at the Institute of Zoology of the University of Genoa and given the name of *Kaloula baleata ghoshi*, in honour of Mr A. K. Ghosh, then Governor of the Andamans.

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thought they were weeds and pulled them up. I never managed to see the plant in flower in the wild state, as this occurs at the height of the rainy season, and as no final definition is possible in the absence of the flower it remains unidentified.

The Onges take full advantage of the plant's properties as a bee-deterrent and in mid-March they eat honey, paint themselves, and dance, twenty-four hours a day. During these orgies I have seen a group of about sixty Onges demolish in a few days ten pigs and a dozen large, wooden vessels full of honey, with basket after basket of fish, caught every night by the women, who were apparently not in the least tired by the long daily treks into the forest after the honey. I can never look back on the Onges without a feeling of profound respect for their powers of digestion!

Yet another source of food for the islanders is the cicada. On Little Andaman there are a few species a little larger than the European variety and others rather smaller. The Onges collect the pupae as they emerge from the ground, usually in the mornings, and roast them as a great treat. They are actually very clean insects, which develop slowly under the earth over a period of years sucking lymph from the roots of the trees. When they emerge from the ground the pupae become leathery, but this presents no problem to the indomitable teeth of the Onges. Inside the cicada chrysalids are a mass of delicate tissues, so white and clean that one can understand the Onges' predilection for them.

On Little Andaman the cicadas chirp intermittently, with long silences; most of the day one hears nothing of them and when they suddenly start up the Onges fall absolutely quiet, terrified of frightening them away and losing their chrysalids.[1] In a few moments the whole forest suddenly echoes with a chorus of cicadas, as they all start up as one and then, a minute later, fall silent. Their intermittent chirping is not confined to the Andamans; it is a feature of several species throughout southern Asia. At Golpahar when I was in the middle of the forest excavating kitchen-middens I heard cicadas start up every day at 6.30 p.m., and then stop until the following day. In the mountains of South India, on the slopes

[1] The Onges do not seem to share the superstitions reported by Man and Brown among the Arioto, who appear to believe in fantastic connections between cicadas, the sun, and storms.

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of Pushpaghiri ('mountain of the flowers'), I saw workmen using the cicadas to mark the end of their shift, so regular were they in starting up. The whole valley echoed with their chirping for three minutes, and promptly at the signal everyone stopped work.

As well as cicada chrysalids, the Onges love the white larvae of the long-horned grasshoppers (Tettigonidae) which are common all over the island. They are the size of a man's finger and the larvae, like those of the cicadas, feed exclusively on vegetable matter and are very tasty. I have watched the Onges collecting them and managed to see something of the life cycle of the Longhorns. Both the larvae and the chrysalids live in cylindrical holes in trees, which the larvae bore out by eating at the wood. Before turning into a chrysalis the larva prepares the way out for the adult insect, which is less well adapted for gnawing. The chrysalids themselves seem determined to take up as little space as possible; as in all the Longhorns the future elytra are clearly visible on the creature's back, with the membranous wings, and the three pairs of legs are always curled up, with the first and second pairs very close to each other. The third pair is further away, clearly so as to balance the embryonic antennae. These are very long and spring from the sides of the head, passing down on either side of the thorax, between the first and second pairs of legs, to finish neatly coiled in front of the thorax, touching the elytra and the second pair of legs. Curled up like this into two or three coils, according to sex, the thread-like, whitish antennae look like intestinal worms inside the chrysalids. Each pair of legs lies motionless against the thorax, the feet touching in a precise line down the centre of the body. When the creature wakes from its long sleep, all the parts unfold, and the elytra and other external parts harden and colour according to the species. A new stage in the life cycle, shorter but more intense, has begun.

The Onges are not interested in the mole-crickets, but I found them fascinating. It is known that animals can find their nests or their usual haunts even if they are moved quite considerable distances away and deliberately confused, but the mechanism is not yet fully understood. It is likely that the same mechanism operates whether in the air, or on the ground, or below ground. The mole-cricket, for example digs long galleries underground and does not often come out into the open. The galleries are interconnected,

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the background rhythm of the woodpeckers tapping on the trunks. I knew that they did this when seeking food, but it was the Onges, natural observers of wild life, who convinced me that the tapping could sometimes be unconnected with foraging. Wherever I camped there were always large trees nearby and with the aid of field glasses it was a simple matter to keep an eye on the woodpeckers, which varied in size from some smaller than our sparrows to others, brilliantly coloured and bigger than pigeons.

One persistent tapper on Little Andaman is a beautiful black woodpecker with a bright red tuft on its head, *Dryocopus martius*, also found in Asia and parts of Europe. I captured some that were thirty-five centimetres long, bigger than any of the other local species. Another, equally common, was slightly smaller than our blackbird and a glorious chestnut colour all over. A little black and white one was even more numerous. I often saw a variety of *Dendrocopus major*, with black and white body, red tuft on the head and a striking crimson feather under the tail. Others were mainly green, always with the red tuft on the head.

All of them hammer on the tree-trunks with their beaks and it is not fully understood why they do so. Tapping in search of insects can be heard the year round and the sound is similar to that made when the nest is being hollowed out. The other form of tapping, true drumming in the musical sense of the word, is only heard in the mating season and is infinitely louder. The Onges connect this sound with reproduction, although they have not grasped the connection between mating and birth. It can be heard over three hundred metres away, while the tapping for food or nest-building carries only for a short distance.

When the bird is breaking through the bark in search of food or hollowing out the nest, the beak usually strikes the trunk at an angle and at irregular intervals. The bird throws its whole strength into each blow, lifting its head right back every time to strike even harder with the next blow. The blows are usually struck first from the right, three or four in quick succession, and then three or four from the left, to dislodge a chip of bark or wood. When the woodpecker nears the larva he is after, still hidden under the bark, the blows may become perpendicular. In nest-building a hollow is cut out of wood, often seven or eight centimetres deep in the case of the larger species, and large enough in diameter to admit the bird. Then

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the hole is enlarged downwards, still the same width, for thirty centimetres or so, to end in an oval cavity large enough to take the incubating female. In both cases all the tapping is done while the bird clings on to the trunk with its claws, which have reversible digits; it is balanced by the tail with its hard, bristle-tipped feathers.

The musical drumming during the mating season is rhythmic, and less violent. The bird selects a hollow trunk and will return to the same one for months. The beak strikes at the rate of about seven to ten blows per second and always in one place, so that no bark is chipped out. The sound diminishes in intensity from the first blow to the last, unlike the food- or nest-drumming. Like the cicada the bird uses its own body as a sound box to aid reverberation, filling itself with as much air as possible. As part of the flight mechanism, all birds have air cavities connected to their lungs and in the woodpecker the system is extremely well developed. These cavities help to increase the vibrations made by drumming on the wood. The head is held at the right angle to obtain the best reverberation (not the best angle for chipping out bark, as when the bird is looking for food), and the bird itself vibrates with the wood, absorbing the short sound-waves and increasing the resonance.

Although to the naturalist there is enough in the wild life of the Andamans for endless studies of everything from cuckoos to parrots, sea snakes, shells with their beautiful spiral patterns – and the wealth of material almost overwhelms one – it must be admitted that the Onges see all the beauty around them mainly in terms of food.

They will search for hours for the nests of the salangana or *Collocalia esculenta*, the swallow which builds well-known edible nests so greatly prized in many parts of the world. The bird secretes a gummy saliva, which hardens when exposed to the air, and it is of this that it builds its nest in caves near the sea, ejecting saliva on to the roof of the caves. The substance acts in Man as an aphrodisiac, which may account for the value placed upon swallows' nests in China. The nests are found usually in the darkest parts of the caves, hanging from the roof, sometimes seven or eight in a bunch. It is not known why these swallows like to nest in the dark, or how they manage to find their own eggs and young when they return to the cave after foraging, or are driven away from the nest by intruders such as snakes. It seems on the face of it impossible for snakes to

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136 *fortispina*, uses a similar action on the larger bivalves. Its shell is equipped with a very effective form of tin-opener, which it keeps polished by vigorous rubbing.)

I watched a *Pterocera* attentively scrutinizing the hand holding it. After exploring it very carefully, the creature tried to free itself by beating violently with its foot, causing considerable pain. I held one by one of its protuberances, which was like a large right-angled hook. Suddenly, while my attention was held by a shoal of fish, I felt a sharp pain on the back of my hand. Taken by surprise, I watched the creature to try and discover what it had done. From a furrow at the base of one large front hook, a little to its left, I saw a tentacle emerge, able to turn in any direction, with a retractable eye at its tip. The eye, after a few exploratory movements, fixed its gaze on the place on my hand the creature intended to hit, and then the foot began to beat wildly on my hand, time and time again, causing a quite surprising degree of pain.

462 226 224 It is during the honey feasts, when the tides are exceptionally low and the seas calm, that the womenfolk come into prominence. While the men normally do all the hunting for game and large fish, using arrows and harpoons, the women, with their nets, catch the smaller fish in the rivers and marshes, and among the coral reefs at low tide. Their contribution to the everyday diet is by no means negligible, and during the season of very low tides their daily haul is tremendous.

262 825 The importance of fish to the Onges is shown by the fact that their word for it, *cioghe*, is also used to mean food in general, and clearly dates back to the time before the arrival of the pigs on the island, when fish and sea food in general was the basis of their diet.

[251] So plentiful is it that even at the height of the season the most they do in the way of preserving anything for future use is to expose the fish to smoke in order to deter flies from laying eggs on it for a day or two.

462 226 Only on very rare occasions do the men help in the net-fishing, and then only when they can completely fill the canoes with fish very quickly. I saw it happen for the first time on 24 March 1953, in the great coral reef near Nachuge, just as it happens all over the island at this time of year, when the pilchard shoals are so far inshore that there are not enough canoes to hold the catch. As the

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build it (when I wanted to acquire two for the new anthropological museum at Port Blair and the Indian Museum in Calcutta I had to bargain with the men recognized as the owners, although the price had to be distributed among all the members of the group).

The chief delight of the men on their fishing trips is the capture of a Giant Turtle. I have already described (p. 88) the spear harpoons which the Onges use to catch them. Once caught, the wretched animals are subjected to a form of vivisection utterly incomprehensible to the Western mind; they are literally cut up alive and the pieces thrown into the boiling cooking-pot. Nor have I ever witnessed anything so terrible as the way in which the Onges, in the absence of any suitable cooking vessel, or the materials for an earth oven, roast these turtles whole and alive over a slow fire. They seem totally unable to realize that animals can feel pain and laugh like children at the other atrocious tortures they unwittingly inflict not only on the turtles, but on every living thing that falls into their hands.

These marine turtles (as far as I was able to see there were no land turtles in the Andamans) yield a far greater amount of food than the dugong, and provide the islanders with both meat and eggs. Two species are common in the seas round the islands, *Chelonia virgata*, or the green turtle, and *Caretta imbricata*, which supplies the shells normally sold commercially. The Onges prefer the former, which are both meaty and more plentiful.

Turtle-hunting and egg-collecting is done by the menfolk. The method is very like that used for dugong and large fish, using the harpoon. Owing to their fear of the spirits abroad in the night, the Onges never go near the beaches between dusk and dawn, when it would be easy to take the turtles on land and immobilize them by turning them on their backs. They do know this trick, however, and use it when captured turtles (often weighing up to a hundredweight) are too heavy to carry in the canoe; the animals are turned on their backs and dumped on the beach ready to pick up later.

The Onges harpoon the turtles from canoes, preferably at night when the turtles are nearing the shore, which they never approach in the day time. When there is a moon the creatures are easily seen, and on dark nights the phosphorescence of the sea helps.

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emerge from the eggs and make their way towards the sea, led by some unerring instinct, fresh predators are ready to pounce on them. Hungry gulls and fish, and the giant crabs, lie in wait and sometimes not one escapes.

But the annual survival of only ten young from each female would be enough to allay any fears for the extinction of the species and fortunately reproduction takes place several times a year, often four or five times, according to the Onges, mainly from March to September.

In the case of eggs which I protected and watched, incubation lasted sixty to seventy days depending on the time of year. During the whole of the incubation period the Onges regard them as edible, like the Bushmen of the Kalahari, whom I saw take and eat birds' eggs regardless of their age or state of development. The Onges even like the turtle embryos when cooked, and the other contents of the shell. Curiously enough, however long they are cooked the whites of turtle eggs never set, although the yolk does and is excellent. The Onges, as a sign of great respect, often gave me baskets full of the hard-boiled yolks.

Turtles, despite their peaceable appearance, are extremely aggressive, and will take on nearly anything they meet. Their battles are one of the most amusing things in the animal world. The males of the marine turtles rarely approach the shore, except to fight each other. This they do ferociously, biting at everything within reach, regardless of being bitten themselves, as the land turtles do in the mating season. The aim is to overturn one's enemy so that he is quite helpless, after which the winner ambles off, leaving the vanquished to his own devices (the trick is to get one's head under one's opponent's body and lever upwards). A turtle, once on its back, takes hours to right itself, which it can only do by accident, when its frantic wriggling and beating in the air with its legs hollows the sand away underneath its back so that it flops over the right way up.

One of the Onges' greatest enemies in their search for food is the crocodile, *teboirona*, as they call it. They have no means of fighting the creature, so they limit themselves to fearing it and building stories round it. On Little Andaman crocodiles are found only near Nachuge on the west coast, in the deep waters of Jackson Creek, *To-ggw*. There used to be numbers of them in a few places on Great

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136 Andaman, in Yeratil Jig (near Port Anson, about fifteen miles from Long Island) in Diglipur (or Dilyapur) Creek, near Port Cornwallis, and in Wilima Jig,[1] but they are now extinct. In March 1932 the Onges had described the presence of crocodiles so clearly to me as to leave no doubt what they meant, and I soon received confirmation when I found their tracks on the sand about one kilometre from the mouth of Jackson Creek, on the right bank, and then saw some lying on the shore across the creek. Through my field glasses I saw small birds pecking between the teeth of the great wide-open jaws. As we approached they slid lazily into the sea, some reappearing a little later, their cavernous mouths rising vertically out of the water. Every day after that I saw them swimming quietly near the banks, and one afternoon my men and I between us saw over a dozen, near Nachuge, dozing in the mud or in the water.

[825] [198] The Onges assured me that crocodiles will come out of the water to a certain whistle. I got them to try it; the Onges whistled, and whistled again, but no crocodiles came!

237 321 276 172 Very different from the great turtles and the crocodiles, but equally important in the daily life of the Onges, are the crabs from which the islanders make their ancient and very characteristic pipes. They eat the crabs and use the claws to make the pipes, cutting them across the joint and boring a hole in the end, as they have done since time immemorial, to smoke aromatic leaves from the forest. Fragments of similar pipes, charred with use, appear in even the lowest strata of the kitchen-middens, dating back thousands of years and proving the antiquity of the smoking habit. Contrary to popular belief, smoking did not begin everywhere with the introduction of tobacco – in Asia at least men smoked thousands of years ago.

237 276 171 The claw pipes of the Onges have a groove cut round the end which goes into the mouth, so that the teeth can grip it better. I have seen identical pipes, with the same groove, in the Melville Islands, where there are many other signs of ethnographic connections with the Andamans. The canoes, for example, are identical with those of the Andamans; the peoples themselves, however, are today very different physically.

[501] [142]

[165] [1] According to Portman a man was dragged into the water here on 11 May 1894 by a crocodile and killed; several similar incidents have occurred since.

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Brown states that dugong skulls are found among the hunting trophies of the Andamanese. I can myself vouch for the fact that this is not the case among the Onges or the twenty-three surviving Arioto; both keep dugong jaws and long bones, but the skulls of only pigs and turtles. The Andamanese in general do not regard animal bones as having the same protective powers as human; the existence in the Andamans of any magical practices connected with either animal or human bones has not, in my view, been adequately proved. In the absence of such proof I feel unable to agree with the authors who assert that these practices do exist, and I am inclined to feel that the cultural level of the peoples of the Andamans is so low as to rule out the existence of magic or witchcraft in any form.

From the mass of data of all kinds I was able to collect on my trips to the Andamans, a general pattern emerges from which it is possible to draw substantial conclusions as to the cultural and somatic origins of the Onges and hence of the other peoples of the archipelago. To summarize these conclusions must inevitably involve some repetition of what has been said in previous chapters.

Taking first the people of the Nicobar Islands, the nearest geographically to the Andamanese, it is generally accepted that with the exception of the Shom-Pen of Great Nicobar the Nicobarese are culturally closely similar. Although there are no pure Negrito types in the Nicobars there are evident crosses, similar to those which appear in one area of Sumatra to the east, where a small Negrito component exists among a predominantly mongoloid type. This may well be the result of the Negritos having spread at one time over a very wide area and there is in fact cultural evidence in support of the suggestion.

The mongoloid somatic type of the Nicobars appears in the general shape and proportions of the body, skin colour, facial contours, and the hair, which is long and straight, unlike that of the Negritos. Both types, however, have scant body hair, and differ in this respect from the pygmies of Africa.

Although the size and skin colour of most Nicobarese is very different from the Onges, a few are strikingly like them in facial contours, size, and woolly hair. There are also legends of a people who lived in the Nicobars long ago, small, very black, with tight

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way in which the spirits are invoked against enemies, involving the use of some personal possession – an example is the invariable destruction of the used *naquinegbe*, or of hair after shaving. The same fear of the night induced by the idea of spirits walking abroad led to the making of torches from rolled palm leaves containing a mixture of embers and resin.

From the Andamans to Oceania the chief spirit is generally imagined in the form of a giant lizard, living at the top of the sky and ruling the storms; none of the peoples who believe in him ever eat any lizard or lizard-like creature. All of them have the same sexually suggestive dances, both male and female, sometimes inspired by the monitor or dragon-lizard, symbol of desire, and often associated with miming and dramatic representations of real and imaginary scenes. These dances, with their *joie de vivre*, are accompanied by the smoking of aromatic leaves in pipes which are frequently made from natural objects such as the claws of crustacea. The Onges in fact have since very ancient times used only this type as shown in the lower levels of the kitchen-middens dating back at least five thousand years. Everywhere, pipes of this kind are used indiscriminately by both sexes, passing from mouth to mouth. Pipes identical in every way with those of the Onges are found to the east of the archipelago, well into Oceania, and I have myself also seen them on Melville Island, north of Australia, always with the same notches for the teeth to grip. This undeniable evidence of the spread of identical pipes over so wide an area long before the possibility of European contacts cannot in my opinion be attributed other than to migration over vast distances in very ancient times.

Similar coincidences apply in the case of the arrow harpoon and indeed harpoons in general. I cannot agree with Brown in his assertion that the harpoon dates from the arrival of European influences, which brought the use of iron; the harpoon points made by long and patient working of *Tridacna* shells which I found in the kitchen-middens of the Andamans are in my view enough to refute the theory.

The canoes from which these harpoons are used, with the absence of distinction between bow and stern and the single float on the lee side, are extremely typical. They are identical in peoples which have been widely separated for a very long time and appear not only on the Andamans, and as far as Oceania, but also in North